

FALL/WINTER

**2021**

# THE *Bee* BOXBOROUGH



BE INFORMED • BE CONNECTED • BE BOXBOROUGH

# Select Board's Corner

Submitted by John Markiewicz, Select Board Chair

This October I was an entrant in the 125th Virtual Boston Marathon, completing a goal I had on my bucket list. Since I walked most of the 26.2 miles, I had a great deal of time to think about the upcoming Thanksgiving Holiday and our Community. This helped me realize just how much we have to be thankful for as residents of Boxborough.

The Select Board would like to express a Great big thank you to:

- All the employees at Town Hall who have stepped up to keep delivering the support and services the Town depends upon to keep the Town running. A special note of thanks to all the assistants:
  - Wendy Abetz - Community and Social Services Dept.
  - Karen Guzzardi - Tax Collector/ Town Clerk
  - Cheryl Mahoney - Town Administrator/ Town Hall
  - Mary Nadwairski - Planning Board / Conservation Commission
  - Kim Pelser - Building Department / Board of Health
  - Cindy Reagan - Council on Aging/ Van Services
  - Erin Twomey - Assessor / Recreation Commission
- The many wonderful and caring volunteers who tirelessly give their time, energy and expertise in support of the many Boards and Committees the Town depends upon to deal with such issues as Water, Housing, etc...
- A number of creative and determined individuals who found a very unique way to bring the Community together during COVID by creating the FREE BEE Market. It was a great way to enhance Boxborough's' Community Spirit.
- All the Town Employees for everything they do EVERY day to make Boxborough a great place to live.

Someone once said, "Great employees are like four leaf clover, hard to find and lucky to have!" Boxborough is very lucky to have found a field of four leaf clover!

Some additional updates from the Select Board include:

- The Board recently voted to reaffirm the recommendation of the Town Government Study, which is an important first step in preparing for our search for a Town Administrator.
- We are also in the process of reviewing the allocation of the \$1,72M ARPA grant money.
- It's great to be welcoming two new businesses to Town, Vibalogics and Arranta Bio have made multi-million dollar investments in establishing their life sciences enterprises at 1414 Mass Ave.
- The former Cisco Beaver Brook campus has been sold to Campanelli, a well-known developer based in Braintree, MA. They have expressed an interest in working with the Town to examine future development possibilities.

## About the Boxborough Bee

The Boxborough Bee is sponsored by the Well-Being Committee. If you would like to share ideas for articles, share feedback on this publication, or get involved please email the team at [boxboroughbee@gmail.com](mailto:boxboroughbee@gmail.com).





# A New Face at Town Hall

**Wendy Abetz**-- I am working as the Administrative Assistant in the Community and Social Services department, and am interested in learning more about town government and how it operates. What excites me most about my new role is this is a completely new endeavor for me as I have never worked in town government. I feel I can bring my energy, skills and enthusiasm to the town to assist people in their community services needs. I am also excited to work with the amazing individuals on the Well-Being Committee and learn from them and the experiences they bring. I have lived in Littleton for 25 years but before that resided in Boxborough. I attend the UCC Church in Boxborough so I have a strong connection with the community and many of the residents. I have 2 sons – one I just sent off to Westfield State University for his freshman year and another boy who is a sophomore at Nashoba Technical High School. I enjoy traveling, reading, gardening, country music and I am an avid Red Sox fan.



## Town Committee Spotlight:

### Volunteers Needed for the Public Celebrations and Ceremony Committee



Do you love the community spirit in Boxborough? Here is a chance to be a part of keeping the town's spirit going while having fun in the process. The Boxborough Public Celebrations and Ceremony Committee (PCCC) is looking for new members. Marissa Picca has been a member for four years and she's ready to mentor a new team before she steps down. The PCCC hosts the Memorial Day parade, the Tree Lighting, and works with the Boxborough Minutemen for Fifer's Day. All the processes, contacts and timelines are documented so you are not reinventing the wheel. It's a great way for new folks, or newly retired, to join in the community fun. Sign up by contacting Town Hall directly or email [pcccbxborough@gmail.com](mailto:pcccbxborough@gmail.com).

The next PCCC event is the **Annual Tree Lighting on December 4th at 4pm** at the top of Middle Road. Join us, and bring something for the food bank donation box too!

# Town Committee Updates

## Boxborough Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

Boxborough's newest Town body is the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC). The Select Board established this group late last year. It reflects Boxborough's commitment to bring such issues to the forefront of public awareness and to foster a welcoming, inclusive and equitable town for all residents and guests regardless of identifiers such as age, gender, orientation, race, ethnicity, mental health, physical ability, religion or socio-economic status.

The purpose of the DEIC is to help research methods to increase awareness and diversity in town, such as education, events, and advocacy to other town boards. By design, the membership of the DEIC is very diverse, allowing for many different perspectives.

One of the first major public acts of the committee was to present a sense of the meeting article to the Boxborough town meeting in June. This article was nearly unanimously approved, putting the town meeting on record as declaring racism as a public health crisis and as stating that the town needs to work to combat racism and support those who are impacted by it and targeted by acts of hate.

As its next major step, the DEIC will be issuing a survey late this year to gauge the current situation in town. To better understand the needs of our community and to propose ways to increase diversity, inclusivity and equity in town, the committee needs to hear from as many people as possible and it urges everyone to participate.

### Committee members:

Wes Fowlks; John Fallon; Peishan Bartley; Lovingsky Jasmin; Nora Michnovez; Lakshmi Kaja; Amy Osenar; Mary Sullivan; Song Issah.

## Boxborough DEIC Survey Coming Soon!

Do You Feel Like You Belong in Boxborough? The fabric of a strong community is woven with the many interconnected threads of individual and collective stories. The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee seeks to strengthen Boxborough's community by hearing from you. Please start by taking our anonymous survey that should be available during the next month. It should take approximately 5 - 15 minutes to complete.

After the survey closes, data will be analyzed and reported back to the community as part of our charge to raise awareness of diversity in town; and make Boxborough more welcoming, equitable and inclusive. Survey results will inform our next steps toward building a deeper sense of belonging for all of Boxborough.

There will be a number of ways to access the survey. The English version will be online on the town's website, and hard copies of English, Mandarin, Spanish and Portuguese versions will be available at the library, town hall, and at the office of Community Services Coordinator, Rose Gage. If you need a hard copy mailed to your home, please contact the Sargent Memorial Library.

Thank you so much for participating and helping us to spread the word! We really appreciate your engagement in making Boxborough stronger!

- *The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee*



## "Put Your Energy Into Sustainability!"

**Willy Wonka's Recycling Factory:** Waste Management Recycling facility is a maze of crisscrossing conveyor belts, whizzing separator screens, popping pneumatic sorters, and ferrous magnets, reminiscent of the wonders of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. To see what the Sustainability Committee and DPW saw on their recent facility tour, Google "WMTour-YouTube."

**We Learned What You Can Recycle:** Items with a numbered triangle may not be recyclable.

**YES:** Recycle any empty, clean bottle, jar, jug, or tub. Recycle paper and cardboard (even empty greasy pizza boxes).

**NO:** Stuff that gets caught in the machines--loose plastic, hoses, ropes, chains, cables, clothes, hangers, broken metal, old cookware. More info? [www.recyclesmartma.org](http://www.recyclesmartma.org).

**Black Earth Composting:** Use newspaper, paper bags, or certified compostable bags to put meat, seafood, fruit pits, bones, corn cobs, cooking grease, and veggie scraps in the green bins near the Transfer Station exit. More info? [www.blackearthcompost.com](http://www.blackearthcompost.com).

**Bay State Textiles:** Recycle clean items made from cloth or leather: wearable or torn clothing, rags, teddy bears, etc. Put them in bags for the Transfer Station or Library recycling containers. More info: a flyer at Town Hall and [www.baystatetextiles.com](http://www.baystatetextiles.com).

**Less Fall Cleanup:** Scientists say we can do more good by doing less. Leaf litter adds health to soil and helps insects, birds, toads survive the winter.

**EnergizeBoxborough:** Coming soon, our new website will help us learn what we can do to mitigate climate change at home.



# Volunteer Profile:

## Anne and Rob McNeece

In a small town like Boxborough, so much of our community relies on residents who volunteer their time, skill, and resources without asking anything in return. If you've ever played at Flerra, borrowed a book from the Sargent Memorial Library, or attended FreeBee Market, you've enjoyed the fruits of Boxborough volunteer labor. One Boxborough couple, Anne and Rob McNeece, have dedicated countless hours to all three of these town favorites – and many others.

Anne moved to Boxborough first, in the 1970s. She was invited to her first volunteer position while running an errand at Richardson's, a store that used to be on Route 111. "I stopped in," explained Anne, "and Ginny Richardson was town clerk, and she said 'as a newbie, do you want to be a Library Trustee?'" Anne agreed, and served as a Library Trustee for the next seven years. Since then, she has continued to volunteer her time for Friends of the Library, a 501(c)(3) organization that raises funds to support the Library, including through book sales and donation campaigns.

After she retired from her teaching career, Anne dedicated even more time to volunteering. She founded a weekly knitting group, still in operation, that donates their handiwork to the church and the homeless. She has also served on the Acton-Boxborough United Way Board and currently serves on the Town Personnel Board.

Anne has also dedicated a significant amount of time to Communities for Restorative Justice, an organization that gives towns a restorative justice option when a young person commits a crime. As a volunteer, Anne works directly with young people who are referred to the program. "As much as the library is a big part of my life," says Anne, "my work with restorative justice is the most rewarding and makes the biggest difference. Each individual that we work with... it changes that person's life forever."

After the fire on Swanson Road earlier this year, Anne stepped up yet again to advocate for displaced families and then continued to volunteer with the FreeBee project as it evolved into a community market with the goal of reducing food insecurity and food waste.

Rob moved to Boxborough "to be with Anne." After they married in 1978, they moved to a house on Stow Road. Rob jumped into his first Boxborough volunteer project almost immediately, helping the Conservation Committee to gather facts and documents to support the town's purchase of Flerra Field. "My father was involved in town government in a small town on the Cape," explains Rob. "I knew about conservation through him and I knew the wisdom of a municipality purchasing land." "And we live right across the street," adds Anne. For about a year, Rob worked closely with the Conservation Committee and Recreation Committee on the Flerra purchase and helped to get the project passed at Town Meeting.

After spending a number of years focused on his career in computers, Rob was pulled back into volunteering in the early 1990s. "Anne went for a walk with a friend one day, who wondered if I might be interested in finishing out the term of a Trustee who was no longer able to serve. I said yes, I would fill out a term. And I'm still a Trustee." Rob has served as both Treasurer and Chair of the Library Trustees over the years.

Rob also volunteers as an advocate for folks applying for fuel assistance through the Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council. He works with about 10-20 people per year, helping them to fill out applications and collect the supporting documents. "I was drafted by the Council on Aging Coordinator back in 2007 to help people apply," explains Rob. "I said sure, so I've been doing that ever since."

Anne and Rob encourage Boxborough newcomers, or anyone who wants to get more involved with the community, to jump right in. "Volunteering makes you feel good," says Anne. "Go to meetings!" says Rob. "We love Boxborough and we're not going anywhere."

*Do you know a volunteer extraordinaire who should be profiled? Make a suggestion to [Boxboroughbee@gmail.com](mailto:Boxboroughbee@gmail.com).*



# Annual Boxborough Winterfest at



## Will Boxborough have snow on January 29th?



"Ironically, the last five years that we have held Winterfest, it has been an unusually warm January day with no snow to be found," says Boxborough Rec Commission Chair Megan Connor.

Whether or not the streak continues, this year's Winterfest at Steele Farm organized by the Boxborough Recreation Commission will surely help shake off the winter blues. "This is the Recreation Commission's favorite sponsored activity each year," says Connor. "It's such a wonderful way to showcase our incredible local businesses and the beautiful landscape of Steele Farm."

Winterfest has been a Boxborough tradition for at least twenty years. It started when a few residents in town wanted to get their families out for some sledding and fresh air. The Recreation Commission decided that a sledding event would be a great way to get neighbors together during the doldrums of winter. What began as just an afternoon of sledding has progressed to an annual community party. Over the years, the Recreation Commission has added to the festivities with music, food and drink, activities for kids, and local vendors like Pony Shack Cider and Two Friends Chocolates.

While the event has grown bigger, it has always taken place at Steele Farm. "It's a great way to showcase the amazing gem that Steele Farm is to our town residents," says Connor. "The view is the best view in the town and you can't beat the sledding!"

The Recreation Commission is excited to have some special guests at Winterfest this year, including the Acton-Boxborough Family Network; an ice-sculpturist who will be sculpting throughout the event; Gina's Dance Studio; and some cuddly animal friends from The Nature Connection of Concord.

While they are still in the process of planning Winterfest, the Rec Commission reports that they have invited True



# Steele Farm Planned for January 29th



West, Pony Shack Cider, the Boxborough Regency, and a new food truck to participate as food and drink vendors. They also hope that Boxborough Historical Commission will share historical artifacts, that the Land Stewards will offer walking tours, and that they can rent out the Harvard Lyons Club' "human foosball" equipment ("the perfect COVID-safe activity!").

And of course, whether snowy or not, Winterfest will have the signature bonfire and a place to enjoy some hot cocoa with friends and neighbors. "We are thrilled for the return of Winterfest," says Connor. "We hope to make it the best one yet having missed last year. And of course, we truly hope that sledding returns this year!"

Winterfest will be held on **Saturday, January 29th from 1pm-4pm at Steele Farm** with a rain date of Sunday January 30th. Football fans will note that Winterfest is the weekend between the NFL playoffs and the Superbowl, "so football watching won't interfere with attending!"

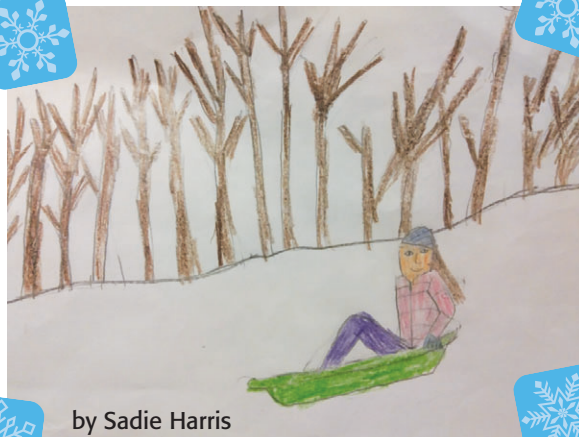


## Winter Fun in Boxborough

by Abbie Harris (age 11) and Sadie Harris (age 8)



by Abbie Harris



by Sadie Harris



# Tips for Dealing with Holiday Stress & Anxiety

From the Desk of Rose Gage,  
Community Services Coordinator



Though the holidays can be a time for celebration, togetherness and joy, they can also evoke stress, anxiety and sadness. The pandemic forced us to change plans, decrease our guest list, create new traditions, and adjust to a new normal. As we continue to cope with the effects of COVID, there are techniques and activities that can be used to protect ourselves from a flurry of emotions and help us remain balanced during the holiday season.

## STAY SANE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

### Mindfulness Meditation Classes

with Erin LoPorto

Mondays at 10:00 AM

4 weeks beginning November 29, 2021

[https://actonma.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-V1-h7jHTOmt2ePZSpN0YQ](https://actonma.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-V1-h7jHTOmt2ePZSpN0YQ)



If you're feeling extra anxiety or loneliness these days due to the holiday you're not alone. This time has us all facing more stress and uncertainty than usual. Meditation can be a pathway back to steadiness that is immeasurably helpful. Mindfulness meditation can reduce stress, relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression, and help you live a more present life.

Whether this is your first time meditating or you want to deepen your practice, join Erin LoPorto for this 4-week program.

Erin found her home in yoga and meditation when she was first introduced to the practices in 2001. She has experienced personal healing and transformation from the 8-limbed path and has been a full-time yoga teacher and yoga therapist since 2012. She is also a bodyworker, energy healer and life coach passionate about building and healing the mind-body connection. Erin brings a playful, intuitive and compassionate spirit to all of her classes, private sessions and workshops.

Funding for CHNA 15 is provided from Lahey Hospital and Medical Center and Winchester Hospital through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Determination of Need (DoN) process. For more information, please email [sball@actonma.gov](mailto:sball@actonma.gov) or call 978-929-6453

Consider the following that stood out in a variety of sources:

- 1) **Stop trying to be perfect & practice self-compassion.** Focus on the people in your life and not on the stuff. It's OK if you cannot plan every activity; quiet time with family and friends is more important.
- 2) **Be Grateful.** Be intentional with your gratitude. Give someone a hug, smile, or send a handwritten note to let others know you care.
- 3) **Do something good for someone else.** Remember the spirit and meaning of the holidays and give back to others in need. You can adopt a family in need or donate your time to a local organization, as some examples.
- 4) **Choose a mantra for the holiday season,** which can help when you're feeling overwhelmed. Some examples are: Be Here Now; Present over Perfect; All is Calm, All is Bright; Hearts and Eyes Wide Open; and Be Still.
- 5) **Practice saying "No."** It is OK to take care of yourself, not go to every get-together, and to reduce your to-do list. A quiet day / evening can help you to relax, be still, and decompress.
- 6) **Carve out some time for solitude** either first thing in the morning or at night. Set an intention for your day and recharge your battery.
- 7) **Laugh.** Laughing with others or by yourself, while watching a funny movie or show, can better your mood and decrease stress.
- 8) **Get some sunlight.** With the days getting shorter, it's important to soak in the sun to produce to increase Vitamin D and Serotonin, the hormone that increases mood.
- 9) **Go for a walk.** Even on a cold day, a walk can clear the mind, decrease anxiety and improve sleep.
- 10) **Listen to Music.** This helps to relax blood vessels, increase blood flow, is good for your heart and calms the body.



# Our Breath Is Always With Us

By Ann Seymour, Boxborough Resident  
and Owner of Daring Dog Yoga

In times of stress our bodies and minds have a tendency to shut down. It becomes harder to find joy, to see things that make us smile and to step out of our daily concerns and empathize with others.

We read about self care/self help practices: yoga, meditation, exercise, mindfulness, but we cannot inspire ourselves to participate.

But breath is always with us. It can increase concentration, focus and energy. It can bring feelings of happiness. It can calm and center our bodies and minds and bring clarity and peacefulness. It is a potential tool to help us manage all the challenges that life throws at us. Let's be honest here, life can throw us some curveballs.

Breath is always with us. Wherever we are, working at our desk, cooking in the kitchen, standing in the sunshine outside watching the autumn leaves change, we can deepen our relationship to our breath and use it to our advantage.

My favorite breathing exercise is simply being mindful but exerting a small amount of control. You can do it anywhere, in any physical location, anytime day or night. It is all about expansion. Breathe through your nose as deeply as you can. Slow it down. Feel where your breath is obvious (belly diaphragm) and move it into places not so obvious (side ribs, back ribs, collar bones). An expansive slow breath feels focused and liberating all at the same time.



To take it one step further, you can affect change in your energy and focus by exerting a bit more control. After a few thoughtful deep slow breaths, **PAUSE** at the height of the inhalation. Continue to a slow exhalation and feel your energy increase. The pause is not a holding. It is more gentle and shorter, a hesitation perhaps. This awakens the autonomic nervous system and sets us on fire. On the flip side, if we want to slow down, focus more and become calmer, you pause at the lowest point of the exhalation. Your nervous system responds with quiet focused and centered feelings.

Anytime. Any moment. Anywhere. Your breath is always with you. Use it.

## How Can Seniors Beat the Winter Blues?

By Kim Dee, Boxborough Council on Aging Coordinator

People can find the winter months bring about mood changes that are often described as the winter blues. How do we combat those feelings?

- Keep to a regular schedule, especially a normal sleep schedule. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Open your shades and let the sunshine in. If possible, head outdoors to get a healthy dose of natural sunlight. Add artificial lighting on the days when the sun doesn't shine.
- Eat a balanced diet. Put a variety of colors on your plate to get an assortment of nutrients from the various food groups. It is also important to stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water.
- Get moving. Adding some exercise to your day can help. Join a fitness, yoga or meditation class. Movement can be as simple as kicking your feet or standing up and sitting down.
- Socializing is another important way to fight off the blues. Have a friend over for a cup of tea or hot cocoa. Visit or call someone you haven't seen in a while. They probably need a boost, too.
- Make a to-do list. Doing a task such as cleaning out a drawer can feel like a great accomplishment if you can check it off your to do list.
- Brighten your home with fresh flowers or a new piece of artwork. Creating your own artwork can be very rewarding.
- As they say, laughter is the best medicine, so watch a comedy movie or TV show.
- Above all, if at any time your sad mood becomes a concern, reach out to your health care provider or a mental health resource like NAMI at <https://namicentralmiddlesex.org>; there is no shame in getting help.

# News from the Library!



Dear Readers,

Years and years (and years) ago, when I resigned from a marketing job to go to library school, a former colleague was bewildered by my decision. He asked, "do you need a degree to scan books?" Oh friends, if you think that is all that library staff do, you are sorely mistaken. Librarianship is so much more than handing you that new NYT best seller. Please allow me to highlight some of Sargent Memorial Library's staff's efforts to brighten our patron's lives in these cold, dark, winter months.

## Reader's Advisory / Book Bundles Movie Binge Boxes

Every book, every movie, every CD that is added to the library's collection is carefully selected. We read book reviews (so many book reviews), find out what our patrons like, look up what is in our current collection, and venture into the world of booktoks and booktubers (that's book reviews by TikTokers and Youtubers for the uninitiated) to see what people are talking about in order to curate the books our patrons would enjoy, and/or would enrich our collection. A lot of effort is put into building up our collection, so we of course would like to see it being used. But for the collection to be used, we need you to know what is in it, and so we put the spotlight on our collection in many ways.

Book suggestions are one of the most straightforward ways we highlight our collection. If you're not sure what to read, you can always ask a librarian! We'd love to help you find something you love.

If you think I became a librarian because of my love of books, you'd be stereotyping and also absolutely right. We LOVE books. We love to read them, talk about them, and put them in your hands so another human can be as equally transfixed/enchanted/obsessed by them as we are. And so, we publish blog posts (<https://sargentmemorial.wordpress.com/>), social media posts (find us on Facebook and Instagram), new book highlighting videos (look for our Youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/BNNz2UssOBs>), book lists for different topics (<https://boxlib.org/services/social-justice>), and staff picks on our newsletter. We also do book displays, provide customized book bundles, have a Cozy Club for cozy mystery lovers, and sponsor book clubs in town. We highlight movies, too! Have you checked out our newest Binge Box series where movies of the same theme are bundled together for your binge watching pleasure? All of this, so we can get that item into your hands.

## Databases and Museum Passes

Looking for New York Time archives? Want to learn a new language? Starting a genealogy research? Researching investment options? Say no more. Please allow me to present the very many databases that we have (<https://boxlib.org/eresources/research-databases>). From Consumer Reports to Great Courses to Scholastics Scienceflix, we have so much to offer you. Please, use them.



## Events

Libraries hold a lot of events. For kids, yes, and also for adults. We hold events that we believe are necessary, entertaining, and/or informative. In the past few months, we've held pastel painting workshops; Marie Kondo philosophy workshop; animal snuggles; and Indian dance and music performances. Last year, we were granted the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Transforming Communities (LTC) grant to encourage discussions and reflections on racism around our lives. With the grant, we held a workshop and a conversation about racism; invited Annawon Weeden to bring his First Light Flashback performance about Native American history to Boxborough; held community read discussions on *Prairie Lotus* by Linda Sue Park and *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, and sponsoring an anti-semitism conversation scheduled for November. We hope these events work their magic to inspire, educate, inform, and entertain those who were able to participate. If you would like us to bring any events to the library, please don't hesitate to let us know.

## Youth Services Department

Did I use a larger font for the Youth Services Department header? Why yes I did. Why? Because we have a fabulous Youth Services Department that serves kids from birth to 18, headed by our fabulous Youth Services Librarian, Heather Waddell! Heather knows how important it is to start readers young, and to show kids that books are friendly and fun. That is why we have a children's collection that is diverse, relevant, and includes many, many great books that are not just fun for young readers, but for fully grown ones as well. Heather also knows that readers progress in different ways and have different preferences on how they read. That is why we continue to grow the children's playaway section and started a read-aloud collection. These read-aloud books have audio players embedded in them so children can read the text along with the recorded audiobook. And most importantly, Heather is always ready to talk books with anyone. Be it a 4 year-old who is passionate about construction trucks, a 4th grader who likes fiction with animal characters, or a 14 year-old who would like to read more diversely. Heather is there to guide the reader through the shelves and help them pick out a stack of books to bring home.

For regular weekly events, Heather hosts two Songs and Stories storytimes for kids 18 months to 5 years old, a Kids' Crafternoon and a Lego club (monthly). For older kids, she has two ongoing *Dungeons and Dragons* clubs where players 5th grade and up develop their characters and go on quests every week. Every week, Heather thinks up new themes for the storytimes, and comes up with new ideas for crafts, such as sun catchers, calming jars, fairy houses, collaborative spray art, and many, many more. The craft projects are designed with the children's interest, motor skill development, and how much fun it is to make in mind. That is to say, none of the programs we do are thrown together willy-nilly without thought. Our job is to enrich our community, and we take that seriously.

Dear readers, librarians become librarians because we love what we do. We love to read, (some of us) love to craft, we love contributing to the building of our community, and we love to share our passions and resources. We see the library as an integral part of town, and we would love, LOVE, to have you take advantage of our offerings. Come pick out a book, select a movie, flip through the papers, or simply sit for a bit. We are open fully, face mask required, Monday through Thursday, 10am-8pm, and on Saturday 10am-3pm.

Sincerely,  
Your town librarian,  
Peishan Bartley



# Holiday Traditions

By Maribel Mendoza,  
Boxborough resident

My daughter recently had an assignment that asked about her cultural heritage and asked her to write down some customs, traditions, and foods that are special to our culture. It was a great activity and one that fostered a great conversation about what traditions we enjoy as a family, and which ones we haven't enjoyed in a while. In the spirit of the holiday season, I wanted to share some of the traditions and food that we talked about and share a quick recipe. Some of these are specific to our Mexican heritage, and some are celebrated throughout Latin America.

Food is an important part of many celebrations and a great way to engage all family members. Tamales are enjoyed by many throughout Latin America, with each country and region customizing with their own flavors. Because it is a labor-intensive food, we often made this a family affair with each person involved in an assembly-line type setup where we each added our efforts toward making a delicious meal that we then enjoyed together. For my family, a corn-based masa (dough) filled with spicy meats always brings back fond memories of cooking, laughing, and making memories together. It's a tradition I've continued here in Boxborough with my kids, even if ingredients can be a little (or a lot) harder to find.

Another fun holiday tradition is making buñuelos together and then enjoying them with some Mexican hot chocolate. Buñuelos are fried-dough goodness that are made with a similar recipe as you would use for flour tortillas, but sweetened with orange juice, cinnamon, and sugar and much thinner. The dough is then fried and dusted with sugar. One of my favorite memories is making buñuelos shaped like stars, hearts, and lopsided circles. The smell of the warm fried dough coupled with the cinnamon-y hot chocolate is one of my favorite New Year's Day traditions.

If you'd like to try making some buñuelos to enjoy with your family, I found this recipe on [recipes.com](http://recipes.com) that is close to the one I grew up making. Note that I have added a few edits.



## Ingredients

- 3 cups (12 3/4 oz.) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup plus 1 tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup cold water (or I like to sub out with orange juice for a slightly different flavor)
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- Canola oil (or your favorite frying oil)

## Directions:

**Step 1:** Process flour, baking powder, salt, and 1 tablespoon of the sugar in a food processor until combined. Add shortening, and pulse until combined and mixture resembles wet sand, 10 to 15 times. With processor running, gradually add water through food chute until dough is thoroughly combined and smooth. Edit to add that if you don't have a food processor, you can also do this by hand in a bowl.

**Step 2:** Remove dough to a floured work surface, and knead until dough is smooth and elastic, about 1 minute. Cover and let rest for 30 minutes. Combine cinnamon and remaining 1 cup sugar in a small bowl, and set aside.

**Step 3:** Shape dough into 24 (1 1/2-inch) balls; cover dough balls until ready to use. On a lightly floured surface, sprinkle 1 dough ball with flour, and roll into a very thin 5-inch round. Repeat procedure with another dough ball. (You will repeat rolling process, 2 dough balls at a time, just before frying.) Another fun step is to use cookie cutters right before frying to cut the dough into fun shapes.

**Step 4:** Pour oil to a depth of 1 inch in a large 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium, and heat to 360°F. Fry 2 dough rounds until golden brown and crispy, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Remove buñuelos to paper towel-lined baking sheets; sprinkle both sides with cinnamon-sugar mixture. Repeat rolling, frying, and sprinkling procedures with remaining dough balls. Buñuelos may be stored in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

We love that our community is growing in diversity and experiences! If you have a cultural tradition (especially one with a recipe) to share, please email us at [boxboroughbee@gmail.com](mailto:boxboroughbee@gmail.com).



# News From UCC Boxborough

## December Happenings

The United Church of Christ Boxborough is an open and affirming church, with doors open to all. In addition to the regular Sunday worship services, which are hybrid in person and on zoom, and a special Christmas Eve Service, here are some special events in December:



**Living Nativity:** Join us in person, outdoors on Sunday, December 5th at 4:00 pm. We'll gather outdoors on the side lawn to tell the Christmas story together! Masked and outside, we can sing Christmas carols together as well!

**Longest Night Service:** On Wednesday, December 15th at 7:00 pm, we will gather in person, indoors. The season of light and joy can also be a time of loneliness and grief. This time of commercialism and busyness can leave us hungry for meaning. Join us for a simple service that provides an opportunity to center in and experience the sacred presence. This gathering is designed especially for those dealing with loss or having a difficult time, but all can find comfort in this peaceful service. This service will be offered in person, with masks required and physical distancing. UCCB's Sounds of Peace will sing and there will be some congregational singing.



## Ongoing Community Support

**Little Free Pantry:** Have you seen the little white wooden box beside the church? It's a small food pantry, filled with non-perishables for anyone in the community. Church members are overseeing the pantry weekly, refilling as needed and have noticed that many folks in the community are benefiting from its presence. Please remember that it is there, and "Give What You Can. Take What You Need." For now, the pantry is all set for donations and the goal is to get food to those who need it at anytime, day or night.

**Afghan Evacuee Project:** We have exciting news regarding the Afghan Evacuee Project (collaborative effort between our church, Congregation Beth Elohim and Jewish Family Services of Metrowest): The family has arrived!! They were warmly welcomed at the airport on Sat. Nov. 13th and brought to their new home in Marlborough. This family of six is comprised of a father, a mother and 4 children aged 6-20. Volunteers filled their fridge and pantry, another team prepared a warm welcome halal meal. Others lovingly furnished a 3 bedroom home. The family is deeply grateful for the outpouring of help they are receiving.

Thank you to everyone who is contributing time, talent and money. This is just the start of helping this family settle into a new country and culture. The work and support has only just begun. It is going to take a village. And there are many ways to contribute. Financial donations continue to be appreciated and can be made by sending a check to UCCB with "Afghan Evacuee Fund" in the memo line. Or donating at our website and putting "Afghan Project" in the memo line.

There are a variety of teams in need of volunteers. Especially needed are the items in bold.

- **Transportation** (transportation for family where needed)
- Education (get kids in school, learn English where needed)
- **Medical/Health** (navigate insurance, medical and mental health appointments)
- Cultural Support (finding religious communities and other support)

If you would like to be part of this endeavor, call or email Andy Migner 508-397-8737/andymigner@gmail.com

# February is Black History Month!

## Celebrate with the Library.

To acknowledge Black experience, history, achievements, and lives, below are some amazing works by Black authors that we hope you would enjoy. With the number of books that are available and worth mentioning, we cannot give them all the spotlight they deserve, so we will highlight a few that may have slid under your radar. The library has a list that is more extensive, though still not exhaustive, online (<https://boxlib.org/services/social-justice>).

### Fictions for Adults

- ***Red at the Bone*, by Jacqueline Woodson:** This is a slim book at only 192 pages that has been described as “profoundly moving”, “exquisite”, and “spectacular”. It is the history of a young Black girl and her family, and how the family member’s decisions shaped their lives.
- ***Deacon King Kong*, by James McBride:** This “propulsive and comic neighborhood epic” began with a shooting of a young drug lord by a local drunk. It was described as “[a] mystery story, a crime novel, an urban farce, a sociological portrait of late-1960s Brooklyn.”
- ***Get a life*, Chloe Brown, by Talia Hibbert:** The first of the Brown Sisters series which stars one of the sisters in each book, this is a romantic, quirky, funny, relatable, and steamy story with a happy ending.
- ***It’s not all downhill from here*, by Terry McMillan:** Witty and joyful, funny and honest, warm and moving, this is a book about a soon-to-be sixty-eight year old, and her relationship with her friends and family. Think of it as *Waiting to Exhale*, a little older, and a little wiser.
- ***Seven Days in June*, by Tia Williams:** This is a second-chance love story about two Black authors that also delves into the creative process, past trauma, motherhood, Black spirit, joy, and humor.
- ***The Broken Earth Trilogy*, by N. K. Jemisin:** If you are a sci-fi reader, you must know N. K. Jemisin. *The Broken Earth Trilogy* is her award winning series that she is in the process of adapting into film for Sony’s Tristar Pictures. The story is nuanced and inventive, epic in scale, but intimate in its character portrayals.

### For Young Adults

- ***You Should See Me In A Crown*, by Leah Johnson:** The story follows Liz Lighty, who hatches a plan to leave the ‘small, rich, prom-obsessed midwestern town’ she lives in because she feels ‘too black, too poor, too awkward’ to live her best life there.
- ***Clap when You Land*, by Elizabeth Acevedo:** This novel in verse is the story of two half-sisters who found each other only after the passing of their father. The book explores grief as well as love, and the strong family bond.
- ***The Black Kids*, by Christina Hammonds Reed:** Perfect for fans of *The Hate U Give*, this unforgettable coming-of-age debut novel is an unflinching exploration of race, class, and violence as well as the importance of being true to yourself.
- ***Akata Witch*, by Nnedi Okorafor:** Born in New York, but living in Aba, Nigeria, twelve-year old Sunny is understandably a little lost. But once she befriends Orlu and Chichi, Sunny is plunged into the world of the Leopard People, where your worst defect becomes your greatest asset.

### For Kids

- ***Twins*, by Varian Johnson:** This is a graphic novel about Frances and Maureen who are twins and were best friends until middle school started and they began growing apart. The story is a sweet, realistic, and sometimes funny look at the way our relationships change as we grow.
- ***Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*, by Kwame Mbalia:** For superhero fans, mythology fans, and anyone who loves an action-packed story. Tristan Strong accidentally creates a hole into the Midpass, a world where ancient African gods clash with gods of African-American legend.
- ***Bedtime Bonnet* by Nancy Redd:** This picture book is about a little girl who searches for her missing bedtime bonnet with the help of her family before finding it in the funniest place of all!
- ***Magnificent Homespun Brown* by Samara Cole Doyon:** This picture book is a cozy and lyrical celebration of the color brown and an invitation to feel the beauty of your own skin.



# Community Announcements

## Hike the "Boxborough 30"!

The Boxborough Conservation Trust (BCTrust) is sponsoring a challenge in partnership with the Town of Boxborough and Sargent Memorial Library: "I Hiked The Boxborough 30!" What better time to hike (or snowshoe) all 30 miles of Boxborough's trails than in winter? No ticks, no poison ivy, no mosquitos, just the quiet, brisk air and crunching snow underfoot. As of mid-November, no one has yet completed the Boxborough 30! You might be the first to earn the bragging rights of walking all the trails in Boxborough. Pick up your form at the library or print it out from our website at [BCTrust.org](http://BCTrust.org) and bring it to the library to receive your patch. See you on the trails!

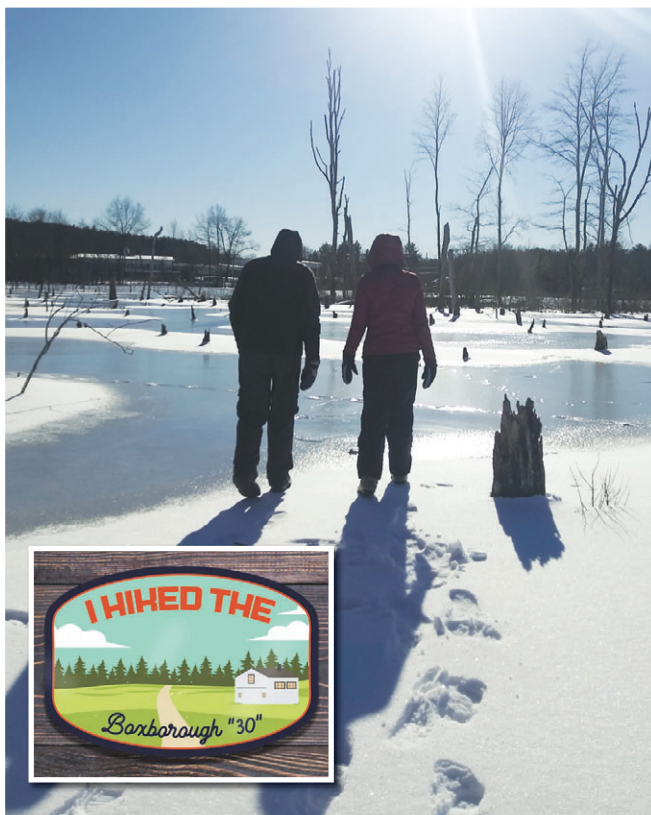
## Come See Boxborough's Treasures

The Boxborough Museum at 575 Middle Road will be open from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Sunday December 12, January 9, and February 13. Come see Boxborough's historic treasures including the 1850's scale which is sensitive enough to weigh a penny and strong enough to calibrate a 50 pound weight, the "new" hearse built in 1881, and the "old" hearse (come and see how old is old). Admission is free and all are welcome. In accordance with Town of Boxborough requirements everyone must be masked. For more information or if anyone wishes to arrange a private tour for a small group at a different time please call John Fallon at 978-264-0069.

## The Boxborough Minutemen Company Wants You!

The Boxborough Company of Minutemen will meet on Sunday January 16 and Sunday February 13 at 8 pm in the Minuteman Grill at the Boxboro Regency Hotel. For information please contact Captain Dave Bull at [captain@boxboroughminutemen.org](mailto:captain@boxboroughminutemen.org), or 978-263-5607.

The Boxborough Minutemen Company is open to anyone of least 18 years of age who is interested in service to the Town and/or perpetuating the memory of the Minutemen of 1775. Our members may participate in any number of the Company's activities including marching in parades, organizing the annual Fifer's Day town festival, performing



seasonal clean-ups on Route 111, sponsoring the Boy and Cub Scouts, providing volunteers to the Blanchard School and other service organizations, and participating in our various social functions. The Company also provides financial support to a variety of service organizations and sponsors a number of annual scholarships to Boxborough students who are continuing their education after high school. Both old and new residents of the town are welcome to come and make new connections with others in town. For more information visit [www.boxboroughminutemen.org](http://www.boxboroughminutemen.org).



## Fuel Assistance Program

Fuel Assistance is one of the programs administered by the Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC). This program helps low income residents with heating costs between **November 1st and April 30th**. Please call (978-264-1719) or email ([rgage@boxborough-ma.gov](mailto:rgage@boxborough-ma.gov)) Rose Gage, Community Services Coordinator, to request an appointment with our trained liaison and experienced Council on Aging volunteer, Rob McNeece. He will contact you to schedule a time to assist you with the application process.

# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

*If you need support, below is a list of valuable contacts. For more resources, please go to <https://www.boxborough-ma.gov/165/Community-Social-Services>. Questions? Contact Rose Gage, Community Services Coordinator at [rgage@boxborough-ma.gov](mailto:rgage@boxborough-ma.gov) or at 978-264-1719.*

Advocates Psychiatric Emergency Services: **800-640-5432** (24/7 number); [www.advocates.org/services/mental-health-services](http://www.advocates.org/services/mental-health-services) (Accepts MassHealth & Medicare)

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center: **800-841-8371** (24/7 helpline); <https://barcc.org>

Department of Mental Health: [www.mass.gov/DMH](http://www.mass.gov/DMH)

Eliot Counseling & Psychiatry Services: [www.eliotchs.org/counseling-and-psychiatry-services](http://www.eliotchs.org/counseling-and-psychiatry-services) (Accepts MassHealth & Medicare)

MA Substance Abuse Helpline: **800-327-5050** (24/7 helpline); <https://helpline-online.com>

Mass Support (A Service of Riverside Trauma Center): [www.masssupport.org](http://www.masssupport.org); 888-215-4920; for 24/7 support, call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990

National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI): <https://namicentralmiddlesex.org>

NAMI MA Compass Helpline: [www.namimass.org/nami-mass-compass-helpline](http://www.namimass.org/nami-mass-compass-helpline); 800-370-9085

NAMI Connection Support Groups: [www.namimass.org/nami-connection-recovery-support-groups](http://www.namimass.org/nami-connection-recovery-support-groups)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **800-273-TALK (8255)**

Psychology Today: [www.psychologytoday.com/us](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us)

The Trevor Project (saving young LGBTQ lives): **866-488-7386** (24/7 helpline)

Therapy Matcher: [www.naswma.org/page/therapymatcher](http://www.naswma.org/page/therapymatcher)

William James College Interface: <https://interface.williamjames.edu>; **888-244-6843**